

RESEARCH PROJECTS LISTINGASMR (Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response)

I am a PhD researcher of cognitive neuroscience at the University of York investigating the benefits of a sensory phenomenon called ASMR (Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response), which is a pleasant tingling sensation felt in the back of the head and neck when listening to certain quiet sound triggers, similar to goosebumps felt when listening to enjoyable pieces of music, by some people. ASMR has been reported to benefit listeners by improving sleep issues like insomnia, improving anxiety and mood issues, and even alleviating chronic pain - even if people do not feel any tingling sensations themselves, there seems to be some benefits found when listening to certain quiet sounds like tapping and water sounds etc for most people. As part of a pioneering larger study looking into the mechanism involved in the brain behind this experience and its use as a novel therapeutic intervention for chronic pain, I am seeking participants for an online experiment and am reaching out to ask if any of your organisation's members may wish to take part? I am doing so because I would like to collect a sample that is not limited to participants of a particular age demographic, but spans a broad spectrum of ages, particularly by encompassing the under-researched over 50 age group. Also, U3A York has kindly provided participants for other, in-person, studies in my lab group recently, so the organisation is a trusted source of volunteers with whom I and my colleagues have had the pleasure of working before. I am reaching out to the national group as this is an online study and does not require any specific locations or travel.

For this particular study, volunteers must suffer from some kind of pain that tends to last three months or more to be considered chronic, though this does not need to have been diagnosed by a doctor and can be anything, from persistent knee pain, to arthritis, to recurring headaches, or pain from conditions like diabetes etc. That is the only eligibility criteria to participate; if a volunteer is eligible and wants to participate, they would be asked to complete three, 10 minute questionnaires, at the beginning, middle, and end of a two week time period. Half of the participants will be randomly allocated to one condition, where they will be given some ASMR sounds to listen to at their own discretion each day of the two weeks, while the other participants will be given the same sounds after the two weeks to listen to whenever they wish in their own time. Therefore everyone will receive the same sounds, but some people will be asked to listen to them daily and some questions about if they liked them, while others will be given them after the end of the study with no further questions.

Aside from a few specific questions about the sounds just for people in the daily listening group, the rest of the questions in the three questionnaires will be the same for everyone in both groups and will be short, standard clinical measures of anxiety, mood, sleep, and pain. These questions will include things like, how you would rate your sleep quality over the last week, what kind of pain you might suffer from, how your mood has been, etc. If a person feels uncomfortable answering any questions on these topics, they should participate in the study and if participants begin the study but change their minds after beginning, they are free to withdraw at any time without needing to give a reason. Please note, all responses to the questionnaires are anonymous, and the second and third questionnaires and any reminder emails will be sent via an automated trigger system after completing the first questionnaire, so none of the responses will be linked to the email addresses of participants, nor will they be used by researchers, to protect the privacy of participants.

I would really appreciate it if my study could be shared with U3A members nationally, and welcome any further questions regarding it. If it would be possible to share this study with U3A members, then could any interested volunteers please contact me through my email address josephine.flockton@york.ac.uk, so that I can give them the link to the first study and a detailed information sheet, along with answers to

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any questions they may have. Thank you in advance for your time and any help you may be able to provide in way of participant recruitment for this PhD project.

Kind regards,
Josephine Flockton
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Posted: 11th March 2025

SMART PLUGS

I am just getting in touch regarding a study my colleague, Gabriel Hughes (copied in) is starting in the next few weeks. We are looking for interested people 65+ to take part in a study on smart plugs and home energy use. I have attached a couple of information leaflets about the study and we are happy to take any questions about it too. We can reimburse people £20 in vouchers for the initial engagement + £10 for follow-ups, plus everyone can keep their smart plugs.
If anyone is interested please contact me, details as below.

Best wishes,
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Posted: 11th March 2025

EXERCISE IN VIRTUAL REALITY WITH ELECTRICAL MUSCLE STIMULATION

Who are we looking for? Individuals aged 60 years and above, without contraindications to exercise or use of virtual reality and electrical muscle stimulation.

Further details here:

<https://1drv.ms/b/c/51a5f465b226adae/EY5vskvThKJBgWa8YH0lbwUBaXOW7WGxtDpqQdHzWTNjQ?e=xU3YSQ>

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